



Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness Act (MOMMA Act): Legislative Issue Brief

POSITION:

The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) strongly supports the *Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness (MOMMA) Act* (H.R. 1897/S. 916). Introduced on March 27, 2019, in the House and Senate by Congresswoman Robin Kelly (D-IL), Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), the *MOMMA Act* would work to prevent America's rising maternal mortality rate and reduce maternal morbidity through implementation of comprehensive set of policies to improve data collection, disseminate information on effective interventions, and expand access to health care and social services for postpartum women. The *MOMMA Act* builds on the *Preventing Maternal Deaths Act*, legislation signed into law in December 2018, which seeks to establish and support existing maternal mortality review committees (MMRCs) in states and tribal nations across the country through federal funding and reporting of standardized data. This was a significant first step, but more needs to be done on an urgent basis to prevent known causes of maternal death. An estimated 60% of pregnancy and childbirth-related deaths are preventable.

BACKGROUND ON LEGISLATION:

If adopted into law, the *MOMMA Act* would:

- Bolster federal efforts to support states in collecting, standardizing, and sharing maternal mortality and morbidity data by using a standard method for data reporting.
- Permit states to expand coverage under the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) from a period of one year to two years.
- Issue best practices to state MMRCs on how to best identify, review and prevent maternal deaths.
- Expand Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program for postpartum care for 60 days to one year postpartum.
- Expand oral and dental health coverage for postpartum women beginning one year after last day of pregnancy.
- Support the Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health (AIM) – a national alliance that works to implement standardized protocols across the country by ensuring that hospitals adopt and implement data-driven maternal safety bundles. Establish Regional Centers of Excellence – a grant program addressing implicit bias and cultural competency in patient-provider interaction education for the purpose of enhancing and improving how health professionals are educated in implicit bias

and delivering culturally competent health care.

ACTION NEEDED:

- ACNM encourages co-sponsorship and passage of H.R. 1897/S. 916 legislation to help improve the health and safety of pregnant and postpartum women and work to end preventable maternal deaths.
- To cosponsor H.R. 1897, please contact Mia Keeyes in Representative Kelly's office at Mia.Keeyes@mail.house.gov.
- To cosponsor S. 916, please contact Jessica McNiece in Sen. Durbin's office at Jessica_McNiece@durbin.senate.gov.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Maternal and infant health is in a state of crisis in the United States with large disparities beginning in pregnancy and at birth that become magnified over time.
- The United States' maternal mortality, severe maternal morbidity, preterm birth, infant mortality, and low birth weight is the highest among high-income nations.
- The United States now has the highest rate of maternal mortality among developed nations. In 2015, the U.S. ranked 46th among the 181 countries and rates of maternal deaths continues to rise.
- Roughly 700 women die annually from pregnancy and childbirth related complications and more than 50,000 women experience severe maternal morbidity, a life-threatening complication as a result of labor and delivery.
- Major disparities in maternal mortality exist, with black women three to four times more likely than white women to die during pregnancy or shortly after birth.
- For every maternal death that occurs, an estimated 100 other women suffer severe complications of pregnancy or childbirth. An estimated 60% of pregnancy and childbirth-related deaths are preventable.
- The United States is facing a current and increasingly severe shortage of trained maternity care providers, leaving mothers and infants across the country at risk.
- Midwives and their model of care have been demonstrated to significantly improve maternal health outcomes.
- Midwife-attended births help reduce the incidence of cesarean sections which carry well-established risks: higher rates of hemorrhage, transfusions, infections, and blood clots—all primary causes of maternal mortality. Healthy physiologic birth means healthier moms and newborns, fewer complications and side-effects, and much lower health care costs.